

It has come to my attention that WMAL Radio in Washington, DC is up for license renewal in October 2003. This letter is to challenge the renewal of that license.

Until recently, WMAL has been one of the best radio stations in the Washington metropolitan area. It provided many services to the community and did so in a fair and balanced manner. Now comes the more recent WMAL, which can only be described as an arm of the radical right-wing element within our society. This, in itself, is not objectionable; however, comments coming from this venue must be accurate and fair. But fairness and accuracy is not an attribute of the new WMAL programming.

I think we can agree that the audience for radio is predominantly made up of listeners during the sun up to sun down time period. With that as a given, these daylight hours are the times when fairness and accuracy are most critical. So let's look at what WMAL offers. We start with Sam Donaldson in the early morning. Mr. Donaldson is a news "reporter" and clearly not an analyst. In past e-mails to WMAL, Mr. Donaldson was described as "not a conservative" (note that he was not called a liberal). But when noon rolls around, on comes Rush Limbaugh. From 12:00 to 3:00 PM we are tortured by the rantings of Mr. Limbaugh. It is obvious that Mr. Limbaugh has an agenda, and that is to demonize democrats, liberals in particular. He has made outrageous statements such as, "Bill Clinton sent missiles into the mideast simply to divert attention from the Monica Lewinsky scandal." He never, I repeat never, has anything good to say about either democrats or liberals. He depicts them as demonic and anti-American. His comments are usually incendiary and intended to put democrats in an "evil" light. Perhaps he does this to retain his conservative audience but, in doing so, crosses the line between fairness and political skulduggery.

Following Rush, we get Mr. Hannity from 3:00 to 6:00 PM. Mr. Hannity, while less incendiary, still presents democrats and liberals as people who are basically brainless and motivated by corruption and power.

So, you see, the daylight hours on WMAL are taken up by two gentlemen whose words are orchestrated by the far right wing, with no attempt to be fair or accurate. Aren't fairness and accuracy criteria for licensing with the FCC? Also, your criterion for "service to the community" is a joke at WMAL. Their programming clearly shows an attempt to rally support for their cause, regardless of how many half-truths and lies it takes. The program "Politically Incorrect" was taken off the air for saying far less than these gentlemen say every day. For the reasons stated above, I object to WMAL being relicensed with the FCC, unless they alter their programming to show considerably more fairness and accuracy.